

# The Unfulfilled Dream

As the charts and graphs on this page show, Dr. King's dream of jobs and freedom — to say nothing of jobs, peace and freedom — is as far, and perhaps farther, away today than it was in 1963.

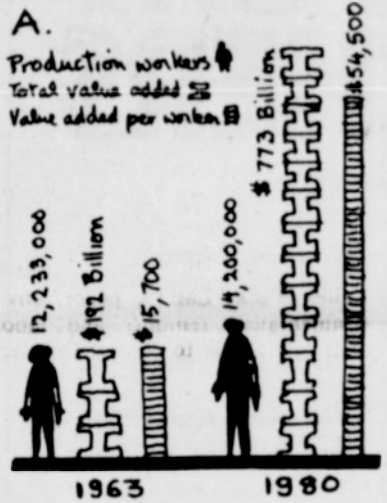
These graphs, using figures taken from U.S. Government publications, tell the story: The official rate of unemployment up from 4.8 percent in August, 1963 to nearly 10 percent today. Real spendable wages down from \$166.25 per week in 1965 (using 1977 dollars) to \$147.05 per week in 1981 and down even further today, if measured in those same 1977 dollars. Our share of what we produce continues to shrink — and our share of the federal tax burden continues to grow. And all of this at a time when social programs are cut in order to make it possible to squander even more money on wasteful and un-needed military spending.

Add it all up and we have our bottom line: More than 34 million people forced to live in poverty — an increase of nearly one and a quarter million since 1965.

### Our share gets smaller

Working people are victimized in three ways: As taxpayers, forced to carry an even larger part of the tax burden. As consumers, whose spendable income falls further and further behind the cost of living and as producers of the goods that provide the underpinning of our society.

Graph "A" shows how the output per production worker in U.S. manufacturing industries changed between 1965 and 1980, the last year for which detailed figures are available.

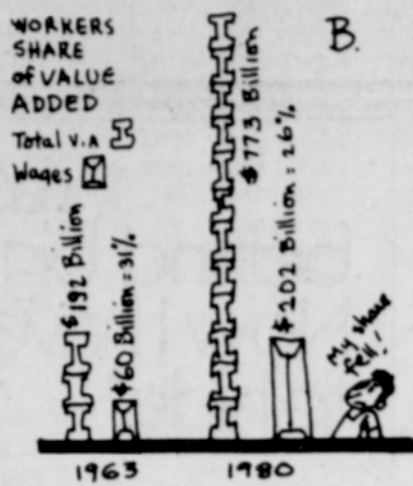


In 1963 there were 12,232,000 production workers employed in all U.S. manufacturing industries. Their labor added \$192 billion dollars to the value of the materials used in making cars, steel, refrigerators and other things, meaning that the labor power of each production worker created \$15,700 in additional value in 1963. By 1980 the production workforce in manufacturing was 14,200,000 or 16 percent larger than in 1963. These workers produced \$773 billion in added value, for an average of \$54,400 per worker.

In other words, a workforce that was 116 percent larger in 1980 than it was in 1963, was able to produce values that were more than four times as large as those produced in 1963.

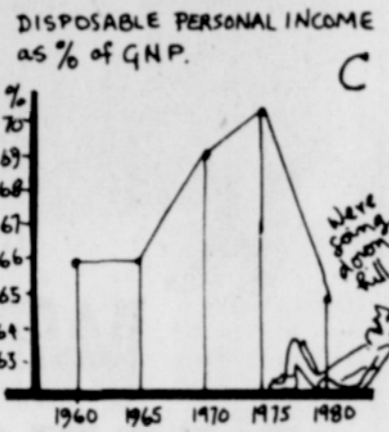
Now look at things from another angle, as we do in Graph "B."

In 1963 manufacturing production workers received \$60 billion in wages — an amount approximately



equal to 31 percent of the value added by their labor. By 1980 wages amounted to only 27 percent of value added in manufacture, meaning that the handful of men who own the basic industries of our country were able to sweat even more out of those of us who work for a living than they had in 1963.

Graph "C" compares the total disposable income of all people living in the United States with the gross national product (GNP).

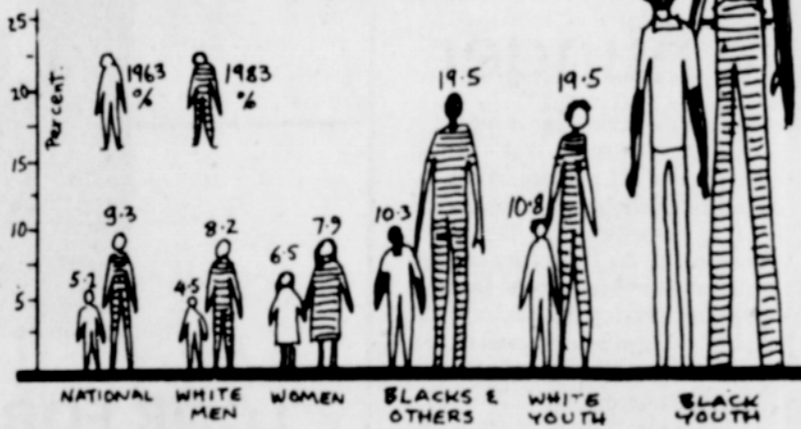


From 1960 through 1965, disposable personal income amounted to about 66 percent of GNP. It increased to 69 percent by 1970 and to 71 percent in 1975. By 1980 it had declined to 65 percent — and we all know that it has gone down since.

If we keep in mind that "disposable personal income" includes everybody and that the rich have gotten richer in recent years (As a matter of fact, they have gotten richer ever since), then it is easy to see that, by any measure, workers and other poor people are getting a smaller share of our nation's wealth today than they got in 1963.

### Unemployment

In August, 1963 unemployment stood at an officially counted 5.2 percent and the government admitted that a little more than 3,750,000 people were unemployed. By August, 1983 those figures had increased until the official rate of unemployment stood at nearly 10



percent, with some 11 million people counted as unemployed.

As with all figures, there is more to the unemployment figures than meets the eye: In the first place the official figure does not count "discouraged" workers — those who have given up looking for non-existent jobs. They do not count those who are forced to work part-time because there are not full-time jobs for them. If these were counted then the rate of unemployment would be about 15 percent and more than 15,000,000 people would be considered unemployed.

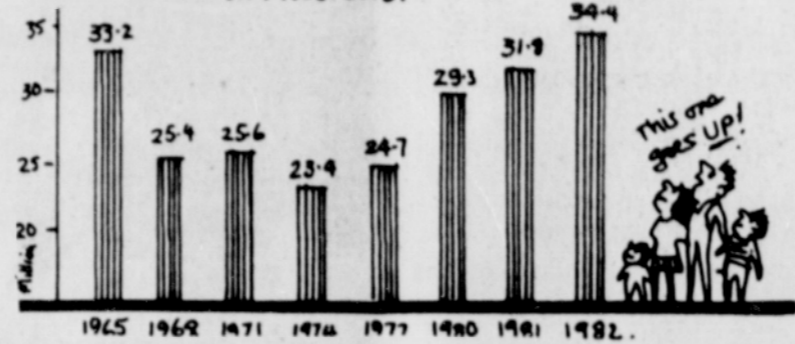
The official figure does not take into account those who have run out

women — one has a better understanding of why households headed by women in general, and Black and Latin women in particular, have become the special victims of the growing poverty in the United States.

### Poverty in the United States

In early August, the Census Bureau issued its latest study on poverty. Its report shows that there are more people living below the poverty line — the government sets the poverty line for a family of 4 at \$9,862 — than at any time since 1965.

### PEOPLE LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE for a family of 4. IN MILLIONS.



of benefits, either — nor the fact that nearly half of all unemployed workers receive no unemployment compensation at all. They do not take into account the fact that more than 375,000 workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits during the last week of July. And they are silent — they do not measure the suffering — that results from the fact that the number of people who have been unemployed for a year or more increased from 55,000 in 1969 to 1,500,000 last May — a 3,000 percent increase!

However, a careful examination of the figures makes it possible to draw some very ugly conclusions: Like the fact that every year for the last 20, unemployment among Black workers has been nearly double the national average and considerably more than twice the rate for white workers.

The same disproportionate burden has been forced on Black teenagers who, even by official measures, have suffered a rate of unemployment that has dropped below the 20 percent level only twice since 1963 and have averaged more than 25 percent every year since 1969.

When one considers the rising rate of unemployment among women workers — and the special burden born by Black and Latin

The Census Bureau says that, of the nearly 34.5 million people living in poverty, 23.5 million are white, 9.7 million are Black and 4.3 million are Latin. And, in what may be the most damning statement in the study, the Bureau says that 2.6 million people were driven into poverty in 1982 — and that 9.9 million people were hammered below the poverty line between 1978 and 1982.

There's more to the ugliness of poverty: While it's bad enough that 12 percent of all white people live in poverty, it's even worse than that for Blacks — at 35.6 percent — and Latins — at 29.9 percent.

Further proof of the racist nature of poverty in the United States is found in the fact that 47 percent of all Black children are living in poverty.

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## District 18 News

When signed, the opinions are those of the author. When unsigned, this column represents the viewpoint of the officers of District 18 Democrats. Address comments to Ross Danielson, District 18 Democratic Leader, c/o the Observer.

by Ross Danielson, District Leader

The Portland Observer's editorial of August 31 too easily concluded that the County Democratic Central Committee had skirted responsibility by "watering down" a resolution against the sales tax. The original resolution, which boldly threatened wayward elected officials, was poorly worded and open to a wide range of principled criticism. It is a wonder that a positive resolution was wrung from such a beginning.

The amended resolution, which was consequently adopted in opposition to the sales tax, requires the Party to provide all County precinct people with the voting records of

elected State officials pertaining to sales tax and other legislative priority areas adopted by the Oregon Democratic Party. This information will be provided to precinct people at least 8 days before precinct people cast ballots for endorsement of candidates in the spring primary.

Taking issue with the Observer's editorial, this action by the Multnomah County Democrats is a big deal. By taking this action, any representative or senator who has "erred" on the sales tax issue and is challenged by an opponent in the primary elections will have great difficulty capturing the Party's endorsement. Endorsement requires winning either three fourths of all County precinct people or at least half of all County precinct people and three fourths of the precinct people in a specific district voting in the Party's endorsement decisions.

To further strengthen the Party's opposition to a sales tax, the County Democratic Executive Committee

last week resolved to appoint a committee on state revenue issues, and this committee will conduct polls of representatives and senators relating to the sales tax question.

Of course any action by the Party would be even a bigger deal if the Democrats' endorsement comes to mean more than it has in the past. But for this to happen, the Party needs more of some of the items mentioned in the Observer's editorial — money, volunteers, committees, coalitions, and grassroots movement.

Against a background of previous efforts to strengthen the Party, the current Party action is a good step forward which should be supported instead of derided. At the same time, it should be recognized that the Party suffers from many weaknesses that can only be overcome by greater rank and file involvement, improved leadership, and new ideas. In this respect, the Portland Observer's attention and critique of the Party are most welcome.

## Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

The downing of a South Korean plane in Soviet airspace last weekend made and has kept the headlines. The Street Beat team asked, "What was your reaction when you heard of the downing of that aircraft?"



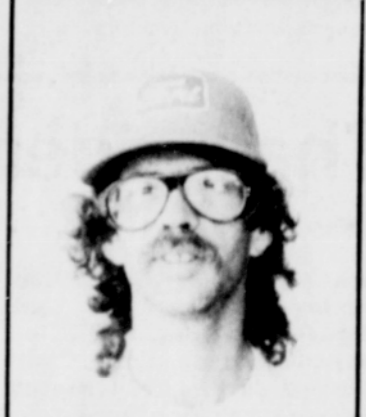
James Faison  
Landscaper

"I think it was unjustifiable. Especially those families on the plane. There were other ways to go about it besides shooting it down."



Shirley McCoy  
Slicer

"There is no rhyme or reason as to why it was done. It could have been handled better without all that death."



Kimo Hoogs  
Roofer

"I can't explain hate. I don't care what the reason was. There is no excuse. I'm afraid if I saw a Russian in front of me I'd pound his head in."



Rick Brown  
Tire Store Owner

"I couldn't understand why they would do it. It was a bad deal. We are all human. It wasn't worth the human life that it cost."



Art Fuller  
Retired

"It was bad. There is no reason for killing all those people. Things like that just brings on war."



Robin Grainer  
Health

"I was horrified. I couldn't believe it. I don't think they had any reason to do it."